

REMARKS UNDER 37 C.F.R. 1.111

Reconsideration and allowance are respectfully requested.

Applicant acknowledges and appreciates the Examiner's suggestion for an Interview on top of page 5 of the office action. Applicant respectfully requests a call from the Examiner to the undersigned to resolve any issues that may remain in this case.

The amendments proposed in this Response address the issues on pages 2-4 of the office action. No new matter has been added. Entry and allowance are requested.

Claims 12 to 28 and 31-35 are patentable over Clarke (US 4,404,250) and Zimmer (WO 96/33306) or Nieminen (WO 98/01611).

The Examiner acknowledges that Clarke does not teach how to obtain and prepare the cellulosic material nor the harvesting, threshing and retting of the stems of plants. Zimmer or Nieminen have been relied on as teaching shortening and separating the plants. Therefore, there is a disconnect between the combined teachings and the claimed features, some of which are admitted to be missing in the primary Clarke reference. There is no basis for dismissing the claimed features, without substantiating evidence, as being obvious. Also, there is no showing as to why Clarke would provide a motivation for one of ordinary skill in the art to adapt the Zimmer or Nieminen processes when the two references teach away from any combination.

Clarke relates to boric acid treatment of conventional articles formed of high pressure consolidation on air-laid web to

thereby form a resultant flame-retardant additive laden article. Zimmer, as best understood from the Abstract, relates to a thermal-insulation article of vegetable fibres with high volume non-woven properties. Nieminen relates to a fibre product of flax with stalk and wood splinters of the same plant formed by crushing the stalk.

Nothing in the combination of the references teaches or suggests the claimed invention which relates to a method of manufacturing fibre mat comprising harvesting and threshing plants, retting stems of the plants, pretreating the plants by shortening and separating the plant stems thereby forming a fibre mass of vegetable fibres, forming a mat with randomly oriented fibres by a dry forming process, forming inter-fibre bonds between the fibres for fixing the mat with the bonded fibres. Therefore, the references cannot render obvious any of the present claims.

Claims 29 and 30 are patentable over Clarke, Zimmer or Nieminen and Gould (US 4,997,488) or Mita (US 4,851,082).

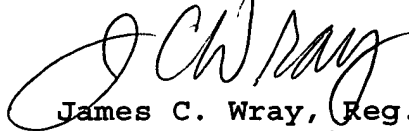
As pointed out above, Clarke, Zimmer and Nieminen do not teach or suggest the claimed invention. Therefore, any further combination will also lead away from the present claims.

Nothing in the references, either singly or in combination, teaches or suggests the claimed features. Therefore, the references cannot anticipate nor render obvious the present invention as claimed.

Since Applicant has presented a novel, unique and non-

obvious invention, reconsideration and allowance are respectfully requested.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'J C Wray', written over the typed name.

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VERSION WITH MARKINGS TO SHOW CHANGES MADE

In the Claims:

Kindly amend the following claims:

12. (Amended) A fibre mat manufacturing method comprising harvesting and threshing plants, retting stems of the plants, pretreating the plants by shortening and separating the plant stems[, pre-treating the plants,] thereby forming a fibre mass of vegetable fibres, forming a mat with randomly oriented fibres by a dry forming process, forming inter-fibre bonds between the fibres [and] for fixing the mat with the bonded fibres.

15. (Amended) The method of claim 12, wherein the forming inter-fibre bonds comprises partially establishing the bonds [when] during fibrillation of the fibres [are fibrillated].

17. (Amended) The method of claim 12, wherein the forming fibres comprises forming [single] fibres of similar material.

23. (Amended) The method of claim 12, wherein the forming inter-fibre bonds comprises applying binders [and] for establishing the inter-fibre bonds.

26. (Amended) The method of claim 12, wherein the pre-treatment further comprises scutching the stems in a hammer mill[, wherein the shortening further comprises] thereby shortening the fibres to a desired length and separating the fibres within a desired length interval by a rotating riddle, and wherein the dry-forming comprises forming some of the fibres into the mat by blowing the fibres into a forming head disposed above a forming wire.

27. (Amended) The method of claim 26, wherein the forming the mat comprises adding between about 0 % and 50 % binder [and] for fixing the formed mat.

29. (Amended) The method of claim 12, wherein the shortening and separating the [fibres] plant stems comprises shortening and separating in a dry condition, and wherein the [pre-treatment] pre-treating further comprises pulping the [fibres] plant stems by boiling [the fibres in pure] in purified water under pressure or in an extruder, chemically treating the fibres, washing and drying the fibres before dry-forming the fibres into the mat.

34. (Amended) The method of claim 33, wherein the forming the absorbing mat comprises incorporating the absorbing mat [in] on a molded composite product.

35. (Amended) The method of claim 33, wherein the forming the absorbing mat comprises incorporating the absorbing mat [in] on a strongly reinforced composite product.